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## Conversions to Islam in Bosnia and Herzegovina, and the Connections between Converts and their Christian families, from the Ottoman Conquest to the End of the Seventeenth Century

Based on the available documents, the author has analysed the connections between converts to Islam and the Christian part of their families, and the way in which the conversions influenced the lives of converts and their Christian relatives. Adopting another religion did not mean abandoning the old habits and Christian traditions. Regardless of the change of religion and the new religious practices they had to follow, there were those who continued living in accordance with the Christian tradition. The converts' contacts with their Christian families contributed to that considerably. The difference in name and religion did not break family ties even when families were separated.

**Keywords:** converts, family, Herzegovina, family relationships between Christians and Muslims

### Introduction\*\*

The complexity of the Islamization process was influenced by the mutual ties and relationships between individuals of different religions who were connected by blood ties, and who had changed their religion owing to a combination of circumstances. Islamization was one of the main factors influencing the social

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and cultural changes that marked the Ottoman period in the territory of modern-day Bosnia and Herzegovina (hereinafter: BiH), the consequences of which are still felt. All those who have had the opportunity to live in a mixed environment know what richness is brought by living with others and beside others, different by religion but by many things similar and so close to each other that they can often be differentiated as members of another religion only by name. As for the reasons for this similarity, one should reach back as far as the Ottoman period, the time when many converted to the religion of the ruling social class in an attempt to ease their life and the difficult position they found themselves in, because after converting to Islam they were exempted from paying one of the taxes. A consequence of that was mixed families whose members belonged to different religions, but often the difference in name and religion did not break family ties even when families were separated. This paper is largely based on the Ottoman tax censuses and court records of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, made in the territory of the Herzegovina Sancak and partly of the Klis Sancak, that is, those parts of it that are situated within the boundaries of BiH today. The Herzegovina Sancak was the largest sancak of the Bosnian Eyalet. In addition to Herzegovina, it included parts of today's Croatia, Serbia, and Montenegro. The Klis Sancak included parts of Lika, Krbava, and Dalmatia in Croatia, and parts of south-western BiH. The town of Konjic was its easternmost point. Due to the limited sources, in most examples emphasis will be placed on the area of Herzegovina, but the presented examples can also be applied to Bosnia, where Islamization was more pronounced and affected the population more quickly than was the case with Herzegovina. The paper attempts to adhere to the addressed time frame, but in order to obtain a more complete picture, in some places examples from the subsequent period had to be included.

### **Basic information about Islamization in BiH**

Islam arrived in these areas with the Ottoman conquerors in the fifteenth century. In the beginning, it was the high nobility that adopted Islam, at first in small numbers, in order to protect their properties and privileges. Over time, Islamization was also to affect broader strata of the population, especially rural. Reports about these events are largely contained in a narrative source: a collection of stories and anecdotes originating from 1585, which also offers data on the first conversions of the rural population to Islam. According to an anonymous narrator, after the fall of Bosnia (1463), the *reaya* (tax-paying subjects of the Ottoman Empire) hardly coped with the *cizye* (poll tax) and other levies, and many left their homes. In order to stop emigration, Christians were advised that one Christian from every village should take a Muslim name in order to free themselves from the *cizye*. Thus, Živko became Jahja, Vuk – Kurt, and Gvozden –

Timur. As soon as they did so, the *cizye* was abolished.<sup>1</sup> Although this is a source created more than a hundred years after the event described, it cannot be completely dismissed as unfounded. Taxes were one of the main items that burdened the Ottoman subjects, so that they quite expectedly looked for ways to mitigate them and make lives easier for themselves and their families, even at the cost of changing religion.

The very act of conversion to Islam was fairly simple, but it still required some engagement of those who wanted to change religion, about which more information has been provided by Fahd Kasumović. A future Muslim was required to appear at the *shari'a* (Islamic law) court, and in front of witnesses voluntarily abandon "all the empty religions" and say the *shahadah* (declaration of faith) in the Arabic language: *Ašhadu an lā ilāha illā 'Ilāh wa-ašhadu anna Muhammadan 'abduhū wa-rasūluhū* – declaring that there is no god but God, and that Muhammad is the messenger of God. A part of the act of conversion to Islam was also a Muslim name that the convert would choose, after which he would be declared a Muslim by the *kadı* (judge). The part of the procedure related to the renunciation of religion was consistent with the *fetva* (legal opinion) issued by the *şeyhülislām* (the person with the highest level of knowledge and authority in religious matters) from the time of Suleiman the Lawgiver, Ebu's Su'ud-efendi. The convert was not considered a Muslim, even when he said the *shahadah*, if he had not given up his/her previous religion.<sup>2</sup>

Many new Muslims covered up the Christian names of their fathers by calling them Abdullah, which translates as a slave or servant of God,<sup>3</sup> but in the Ottoman sources before the end of the sixteenth century one finds a considerable number of new Muslims who also stated the Christian names of their fathers. During

<sup>1</sup> Nenad Moačanin, *Turska Hrvatska. Hrvati pod vlašću Osmanskog Carstva do 1791. Preispitivanja* [Turkish Croatia: The Croats under the Ottoman Empire before 1791: Reassessments] (Zagreb: Matica hrvatska, 1999), 112; A copy of the said manuscript has also been analysed by Tijana Krstić, "Conversion and Converts to Islam in Ottoman Historiography of the Fifteenth and Sixteenth Centuries", in: *Writing History at the Ottoman Court – Editing the Past, Fashioning the Future*, ed. Emine Fetvacı and Erdem Çipa (Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 2013), 71-72; About the Muslim names that the converts were given, their origins and meanings, see: Amina Kupusović, "Muslimanska imena u opširnom popisu Bosanskog sandžaka iz 1604. godine" [Muslim names in an extensive census of the Bosnian sancak (1604)], *Prilozi za orijentalnu filologiju* 40 (1990): 267-308.

<sup>2</sup> Fahd Kasumović, "Prijelazi na islam u sidžilima sarajevskog šerijatskog suda iz prve polovine 19. stoljeća" [Conversions to Islam in the sigils of the Sharia court in Sarajevo from the first half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century], in: *Identitet Bosne i Hercegovine kroz historiju. Zbornik radova*, vol. I, ed. Husnija Kamberović (Sarajevo: Institut za istoriju, Posebna izdanja, knjiga VIII, 2011), 218 and 219 with accompanying notes.

<sup>3</sup> Jusuf Mulić, *Hercegovina. Vojna i upravna jedinica Osmanskog Carstva. Knjiga 2. 1. (XV i XVI stoljeće)* [Herzegovina as a military and administrative unit in the Ottoman Empire, Book 2.1 (15<sup>th</sup> and 16<sup>th</sup> centuries)] (Mostar: Muzej Hercegovine, 2004), 155, n. 396; Krstić, "Conversion and Converts to Islam", 63.

the seventeenth century and later, this changed and the converts only stated the name Abdullah as the name of their Christian fathers. Here we single out just one example that is found in the court records of the Mostar *kadi*, where it is recorded that in 1764, "Hasan, son of Abdullah, converted to Islam."<sup>4</sup> There are no more detailed data on the converts or the circumstances of conversions to Islam in the said court records or in other records and defters (Ottoman registers) used here. The reason for that is that the court records treated here are only partially saved, unlike the later court records, primarily those from the nineteenth century, which provide more details on the process of conversion to Islam. Thus, in the first half of the nineteenth century, the court records analysed by Kasumović, besides the indication that a certain person converted to Islam, in some cases also specify his origin, occupation, residence, or the witnesses who attended the act of conversion.<sup>5</sup> In addition, these records have been preserved in continuity, which is not the case with the registers used here.

Data on the rate and degree of Islamization are provided by the first Ottoman censuses, produced immediately after the conquest of Bosnia in 1468/1469 and most of Herzegovina in 1475/1477, which show that in most parts of the country the process of Islamization progressed slowly and was mostly reduced to conversions of individuals and smaller groups. In both censuses, there is a large number of villages mentioned in which there was not a single Muslim, so that the number of Islamized rural population, which was also the most numerous, was very small. With the exception of fortress commanders and garrison men, who with some exceptions were all Muslims who came with the conquering army, the majority population was Christian.<sup>6</sup> It is not until the beginning of the sixteenth

<sup>4</sup> *Sidžili mostarskog kadije. Fragmenti iz 1044-1207. h. god./1635-1793. godine (regesta)* [Sigils of the Mostar kadi: Fragments from 1044-1207, Chr. Year 1635-1793 (regesta)] ed. Hivzija Hasandedić (Mostar: Arhiv HNK/Ž, 2011), 100. More information about the name Abdullah as the father's name in Herzegovina and the neighbouring Ottoman provinces are brought by Olga Zirojević, *Islamizacija na južnoslovenskom prostoru. Konvertiti: kako su se zvali* [Islamization in the South Slavic lands: Converts and how they were called] (Belgrade: Srpski genealoški centar, 2012), 33-50.

<sup>5</sup> Kasumović, "Prijelazi na islam", 218, 219, 226, 227, 228, and 233, see notes 7, 10, 30, 31, 35, 48.

<sup>6</sup> *Sumarni popis sandžaka Bosna iz 1468./1469.* [A summary census of the Bosnian sancak], trans. and ed. Ahmed S. Aličić (Mostar: Islamski kulturni centar, 2003); *Poimenični popis sandžaka vilajeta Hercegovina* [Census of the sancaks in the Vilayet of Herzegovina], transl. and ed. Ahmed S. Aličić (Sarajevo: Orijentalni institut, 1985). Among the works that look into the issue of Islamization in Bosnia and Herzegovina, we single out: Nedim Filipović, "Osvrt na pitanje islamizacije na Balkanu pod Turcima" [Review of the question of Islamization in the Balkans under the Ottomans], *Godišnjak Akademije nauka i umjetnosti BiH* 13 (1976): 385-416; Adem Handžić, "O širenju islama s posebnim osvrtom na srednju Bosnu" [On the expansion of Islam, especially in central Bosnia], *Prilozi za orijentalnu filologiju* 41 (1991): 37-52; Ahmed S. Aličić, "Širenje islama u Hercegovini" [Expansion of Islam in Herzegovina], *Prilozi za orijentalnu filologiju* 41 (1991): 67-73; Ahmed S. Aličić, "Privredna i konfesionalna struktura stanovništva u Hercegovini krajem XVI. stoljeća" [Economic and confessional structure of the population in Herzegovina (late 16<sup>th</sup> c.)], *Prilozi za orijentalnu filologiju* 40 (1991): 125-192; Milan Vasić, "Islamizacija u jugoslavenskim zemljama" [Islamization in the Yugoslav lands],

century that one can observe an increase in Islamization, leading to a change in the denominational pattern by the beginning of the seventeenth century. This is also shown by the census for the “Herzog’s Province”<sup>7</sup> from 1585 and that of the Bosnian Sancak from 1604.<sup>8</sup> According to Anton Minkov, by the mid-sixteenth century more than 40% of the population in Bosnia and Herzegovina had converted to Islam, while this percentage was significantly smaller in other European provinces. Thus, the areas of Euboea, Janjina, and Prizren remained prevalently non-Muslim, and in the western Rhodope region, 13% of the population had converted to Islam by the end of 1530. In northern Albania, in the Dukagjin Sancak, Islam had been adopted by 16% of the population by 1571.<sup>9</sup> Nenad Moačanin is of the opinion that the occurrence of famine played a major role in the spread of Islam in the early sixteenth century, especially in Bosnia, where people were struggling with poor yields of grain, which, with the increase in the number of *sipahis* (cavalrymen) in the sancak that was exceptionally important in military terms, made it additionally difficult to pay the taxes. In places where the Vlach cattle-breeding population prevailed, as was the case in the Sancak of Herzegovina, conversions to Islam were considerably fewer. The population could compensate for the lack of grain and other crops by selling cattle-breeding products, which made the payment of monetary levies easier.<sup>10</sup> However, as the growing number of Vlachs was reduced to the status of underprivileged non-Muslim subjects in Herzegovina too, the payment of numerous levies was becoming an unbearable burden for them. The sancaks of neither Bosnia nor Herzegovina were

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*Prilozi za orijentalnu filologiju* 41 (1991): 425-441; Alexander Lopašić, “Islamisation of the Balkans with Special Reference to Bosnia”, *Journal of Islamic Studies* 5 (1994), no 2: 163-186; Antonina Zhelezkova “The Penetration and Adaptation of Islam in Bosnia from the Fifteenth to the Nineteenth Century”, *Journal of Islamic Studies* 5 (1994), no. 2: 187-208; Aladin Husić, “Neke karakteristike prihvatanja islama u Bosanskom sandžaku početkom 16. stoljeća” [Some characteristics of Islamization in the Bosnian sancak (early 16<sup>th</sup> c.)], *Prilozi za orijentalnu filologiju* 60 (2011): 221-240; David Do Paço, “Un islam approprié. La Bosnie et l’Herzégovine au XVI<sup>e</sup> et XVII<sup>e</sup> siècle”, in: *Les musulmans dans l’histoire de l’Europe, Vol. 2, Passages et contacts en Méditerranée*, ed. Jocelyne Dakhlija and Wolfgang Kaiser (Paris: Albin Michel, 2013), 191-217.

<sup>7</sup> Name for the territory of Herzog Stjepan Vukčić Kosača (1404-1466), a Grand Duke who held the title of Herzog from 1448. The area he governed, which included present-day Herzegovina and parts of Croatia, Serbia, and Montenegro, was already referred to as Herzegovina during his lifetime. More about Herzog Stjepan in: Sima Ćirković, *Herceg Stefan Vučić-Kosača i njegovo doba* [Herzog Stefan Vučić-Kosača and his times] (Belgrade: Naučno delo, 1964).

<sup>8</sup> *Opširni katastarski popis za oblast Hercegovu iz 1585. godine* [Extensive cadastre register for Herzog’s Province (1585)] vol. I-II, trans. and ed. Ahmed S. Aličić (Sarajevo: Dobra knjiga, 2014); *Opširni popis Bosanskog sandžaka iz 1604. godine* [Extensive census of the Bosnian sancak (1604)] vol. I-III, trans. and ed., Adem Handžić, Snježana Buzov, Lejla Gazić, and Amina Kupusović (Sarajevo: Bošnjacki institut Zürich, Odjel Sarajevo, Orijentalni institut, 2000).

<sup>9</sup> Anton Minkov, *Conversion to Islam in the Balkans: Kisve Bahası Petitions and Ottoman Social Life, 1670-1730* (Boston and Leiden: Brill, 2004), 47.

<sup>10</sup> Moačanin, *Turska Hrvatska*, 108-110.

immune to the occurrences of famine, which almost regularly occurred due to low productivity and drought. People were often on the verge of hunger, and the frequent occurrences of plague and other infectious diseases, natural disasters, and numerous levies and fees that they had to pay, additionally aggravated the position. Hunger and poverty were certainly a good motive for converting to Islam, but despite the case of Herzegovina, as opposed to Bosnia, we cannot talk about mass conversions. It should be borne in mind that the second half of the seventeenth century was also the time of wars for liberation from the Ottoman rule, which, although mostly waged in the neighbourhood, had their echo in various events in Bosnia and Herzegovina, primarily through the Uskoks' activity and the population crossing to the Christian territory. Thousands of Catholics from Herzegovina moved to the areas under the Venetian rule in Dalmatia. According to the data provided by Andrija Nikić, from the surroundings of Mostar alone about 5000 Catholics left at the very end of the seventeenth century.<sup>11</sup>

Conversions to Islam were mostly individual and did not always involve entire families. According to Milan Vasić, if a convert had under-age children, they were declared Muslims, but if there were adult family members in the same household, they would most frequently continue to live as Christians. The advantage for such a household, which was considered Muslim because of the converts in the family, was primarily in obtaining tax and other reliefs.<sup>12</sup> According to the data provided by Močanin, converts were freed not only from the *cizye*, but also other levies, such as land tax, wedding tax, or court fees, were reduced. Obligations of a convert towards the state could be reduced by 45%.<sup>13</sup> Insight into the tax obligations of Muslims and non-Muslims is provided by the *kanunname* (law book) for Herzog's Province, which prescribes that tax on the *çift* (a type of feudal estate) of 22 *akçes* (small silver coins) should be paid by married Muslims subjects and those who live alone. Married Muslims who lived with their brothers or father in one household had to pay nine *akçes*, while the *ispence* (a tax paid by Christian land cultivators) of 25 *akçes* was taken from the non-Muslims, regardless of whether they were married or not, which along with the *cizye* and other tax obligations was an additional burden for non-Muslim subjects.<sup>14</sup>

<sup>11</sup> Andrija Nikić, "Pokušaji oslobođanja i islamizacija u XVII. st. u Hercegovini prema rimskim izvorima" [Liberation attempts and Islamization in 17<sup>th</sup>-century Herzegovina, according to the Roman sources], *Nova et vetera* 29 (1979), no. 1: 173.

<sup>12</sup> Vasić, "Islamizacija u jugoslovenskim zemljama", 436; About the conversion of under-age children of converts to Islam, and the conversion of children who were on the verge of becoming adults, specific examples are provided by Kasumović, "Prijelazi na islam", 222, 228, 229, see notes 21, 35, 38, 39.

<sup>13</sup> Močanin, *Turska Hrvatska*, 109-110. Močanin also points out that the reduction of tax liabilities by 45% applies only to Bosnia. In Slavonia, for example, conversion brought a 13% tax reduction. *Ibid.*, 111.

<sup>14</sup> *Opširni katastarski popis za oblast Hercegovu*, vol. II, 1. More information on the rights and obligations of the population is provided by the *kannunname* from the 15<sup>th</sup>, 16<sup>th</sup>, and 17<sup>th</sup> centuries. Branislav



However, hunger and tax burdens were not the only motives behind conversions to Islam. Rather, they resulted from a number of factors that influenced Islamization to a greater or lesser extent,<sup>15</sup> including the political situation. As the Christian army was defeated at the Battle of Mohács (1526), all hope for quick liberation from the Ottoman rule waned. Realizing that the Ottoman rule was an inevitable reality that they had to accept, many looked for protection from all kinds of violence and the increasing tax burdens by converting to Islam. Adding to these bad crop years and the occurrences of famine, infectious diseases, and wars, which were frequent in these areas, banditry and violence inflicted by the representatives of the Ottoman authorities further aggravated the position of Christians. Thus, converting to Islam seemed to be the best solution. The process of Islamization, which started in the fifteenth century, lasted with varying intensity almost until the end of the Ottoman rule, which led to a significant change in the religious composition of the population.

Although it is evident from the Ottoman records that conversions to Islam were voluntary, the sources of Christian provenance indicate that this was not always the case. Although many adopted the religion of the conqueror because of an unfavourable social status and under the weight of numerous levies, there were also examples of direct pressure and compulsion to convert. Although it is written in the Qur'an that "in religion there is no compulsion" (Qur'an II: 256), this did not prevent individuals and groups from resorting to brute force in order to make someone adopt Islam. This is exactly what happened to Pater Jure Lerotić, who was intercepted by some Ottoman soldiers from Vrgorac on his way to Mostar in June 1647. Under the threat of death, Pater Jure abandoned the monastic habit and converted to Islam taking the name Mehmed. Three weeks later, he fled to the Bishop of Makarska and asked for the permission to celebrate the Holy Mass again.<sup>16</sup> An even more illustrative case may be the one presented by Karlo Jurišić, who states that the Ottomans took to prison the Bishop of Makarska, Pater Mar-

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Đurdev et al., ed., *Kanuni i kanun-name za Bosanski, Hercegovački, Zvornički, Kliški, Crnogorski i Skadarski sandžak* [Kanuns and kanunnames for the sancaks of Bosnia, Hercegovina, Zvornik, Klis, Montenegro, and Skadar] Monumenta Turcica, Historiam Slavorum Meridionalium Illustrantia, Tomus primus, Series I, Zakonski spomenici, Vol. 1 (Sarajevo: Orijentalni institut, 1957).

<sup>15</sup> More about the motives of conversion to Islam and the factors that influenced its expansion in: Minkov, *Conversion to Islam*, 64-109.

<sup>16</sup> "Un padre fra Giorgio Lerotich ciamato, sacerdote gia di 30 anni, pigliando consueto presente, che si da ogni anno da quello Convento al Bassa di Servia, se ne andava dal detto Bassa à Mostar per presentarli. Interim per la strada fu assalito dalli soldati Turcshechi de Vargoraz li quali lo spogliorno da detto che haveva, e li minciavano la morte, se non si valesse con Turco, e cosi lui misero pertorito dalla paura si fece Turco lasciando l'habito religioso, e fu circunsico ciamandosi Mehmed, e stete questo erore 3 settimane, e poi se ne fugi, e vene à Macharsca da Monsignor fra Pietro Vescovo di Macharsca, e fu da lui assoluto da questo erore, e ammesso alla celebracione della mesa..." Marko Jačov, *Le missioni cattoliche nei Balcani durante la guerra di Candia (1645-1669)*, Vol. I, *Stude et testi* 353 (Vatican: Biblioteca apostolica Vaticana, 1992), 131.

ijan Lišnjić, during the Mass that he celebrated near Mostar around 1670, and under death threats tried to force him to adopt Islam. The bishop was saved by the Mostar Catholics who collected money, after getting a beating themselves. Jurišić rightfully wonders: "If the Turks treated a Catholic bishop so, then how they might have treated ordinary Christians in some cases?"<sup>17</sup>

## Religious divisions within families

Ottoman censuses contain a large number of examples in which the converts indicate the Christian names of their fathers. We find them in every listed *nahiye* (sub-district) and every *kaza* (juridical district). Giving all the recorded examples would take away space for no useful purpose, as they differ only by the names and places in which they were registered. Only in the Mostar *kaza*, several dozens of them were registered in the census of Herzog's Province from 1585. However, what particularly attracts attention, and what we find in a considerably smaller number in the documents analysed here, is the Christians who state the Muslim names of their fathers. This tells us that they were adults at the time of their fathers' conversion to Islam, and as such did not become Muslims by automatism, like in the case of minors, but had the right of choice in terms of religion. It is difficult to say what age was involved, but given that sexual maturity was considered as a sign of adulthood, children, in this case boys, may have been between 12 and 18 years of age.<sup>18</sup> In the documents covered here, there are no registered examples of conversions to Islam that involve children of converts in any way. At the time of production of these censuses, most of these "children" were at an adult age, because they were registered as holders of *baştinas* (land conglomerates owned by a peasant family), except in two cases concerning the Vlach population, registered by name for every *cemaat* (community). During the census of Klis Sancak in 1550, in the village of Blagaj that belonged to Uskoplje, "Vukdrag, son of Širmerd," was registered within the *cemaat* of primikur (local elder) Miloš, and "Vukdrag, son of Ilijas" was registered in the *cemaat* of knez Lala in the village of Dolnji Skrit, which also belonged to Uskoplje.<sup>19</sup> As these were *cemaats*, or communities of the Vlach population, their fathers probably

<sup>17</sup> Karlo Jurišić, "Turska vladavina i kulturne prilike u Zabiokovlju 1493-1717. god. s osobitim obzirom na postanak 'Hasanaginice'" [Ottoman rule and the cultural situation in Zabiokovlje, 1493-1717, with special reference to the composition of "Hasanaginica"], *Kačić - Zbornik Franjevačke provincije Presvetog Otkupitelja* 12 (1980): 160.

<sup>18</sup> According to the data provided by Kasumović, opinions of the Hanefi lawyers on legal age are different. According to one opinion, the lower and upper limits of sexual maturity in girls could be 9 and 17, respectively, and in boys 12 and 18, respectively, and according to others, the upper limit for both girls and boys was 15 years of age. Kasumović, "Prijelazi na islam", 229-230 (text and n. 40).

<sup>19</sup> *Opširni popis Kliškog sandžaka iz 1550. godine* [Extensive census of the Klis Sancak (1550)] trans. and ed. Fehim Dž. Spaho and Ahmed S. Aličić (Sarajevo: Orijentalni institut, 2007), 29.



performed certain services for the Ottoman authorities. We can only speculate about the reasons why they converted to Islam, since the Vlach population was not engaged in agriculture and as such was exempt from paying *reaya*'s taxes. Although the process of sedentarization of the Vlach population, and their gradual reduction to the status of *reaya* with all the associated obligations, began from the first half of the sixteenth century, the *cemaats* mentioned herein were still paying only the *filori* (livestock tax), thus the mentioned process cannot be taken as a reason for converting to Islam.

Christians with Muslim fathers' names are also found in the list of Herzog's Province from 1585, where "Radašin, son of Karadoz" was registered among other Muslims and Christians who took over obligations on the *çiflik* (agricultural estate) of a person called Hussein. Similar examples were registered in many different *nahiye*s. Part of the property of certain "Radko, son of Sinan" was registered in the village of Žiljevo in the *nahiye* of Nevesinje; *baştinas* of "Vukilja, son of Skender" and "Milan, son of Atmadžin" were registered in the villages of Dramiševo and Živanj in the *nahiye* of Konac Polje; "Ivan, son of Hasan" in the village of Idbar; "Miloje, son of Jusuf?" and "Ljubinko, son of Mehmed" in Željuša near Mostar were registered in the *nahiye* of Neretva; "Ivko, son of Rizvan" in the Duvno area; while "Marko, son of Murat", then "Vukoje, son of Selak" and "Mihailo, son of Husein" were registered in the *nahiye* of Mileševo.<sup>20</sup> The question arises here whether Vukdrag, Radašin, Ivan, Ivko and others mentioned here remained Christians to the end, or converted to Islam later on. If we suppose that their fathers had converted to Islam for tax relief, which is very likely, the sons were able to enjoy those benefits as long as their fathers were alive. However, after their deaths, if there were no other converts in the family, they could expect to lose the acquired benefits with a new census that would follow and determine the factual situation. Therefore, we can rightly presume that most of the Christians mentioned here also converted to Islam sooner or later.

It was certainly difficult to remain a Christian in the Muslim environment, especially if most of the immediate family had embraced Islam. This may be best illustrated by the example recorded in the village of Buljine, in the *nahiye* of Neretva, where six brothers were registered, of which only one remained a Christian. We mention them in the order in which they were registered: Hamza, Hasan, Abdul, Grgur, Sulejman, and Ilija.<sup>21</sup> With five brothers being converts,

<sup>20</sup> *Opširni katastarski popis za oblast Hercegovu*, vol. II, 37, 46, 52, 58, 109, 304, 393, 527, 530, 531. In the entire article we use examples from the second volume of the census for the Herzog's Province, since the second volume covers a much larger area of that province, as opposed to the first part encompassing only the Foča and Čajniče *kazas*.

<sup>21</sup> *Opširni popis Kliškog sandžaka*, 221. It is necessary to mention another example that we find in a *çiflik* in the village of Voljice, in the *nahiye* of Uskoplje, where, among others, Berak and Mehmed, sons of Ivaniš, and Petar and Marko, also sons of Ivaniš, are mentioned as co-owners. It is unclear from the list whether these were four brothers or the same father's name is just a coincidence, which

it should not be doubted that Grgur converted to Islam, too, yet it is uncertain at which point. Even if they did not live in a common household, it would have been a true accomplishment for Grgur to remain a Christian. This is supported by the following: In a *mezra* (deserted village or land reclaimed by a nearby village) in the village of Štip, also in the *nahiye* of Neretva, five Muslims and one Christian, Marko, were specified as co-owners of a *çiflik*. The census-taker also states that the mentioned Marko converted to Islam and took the name Hasan.<sup>22</sup> If Marko, who, judging by the data provided by the census-taker, was not akin to the other co-owners of the *çiflik*, and who probably, under the pressure of the environment in which he worked and lived, and the privileges that other co-owners had as Muslims, converted to Islam, what can we expect from Grgur, all of whose brothers had done so? It is unclear whether the brothers converted to Islam together or individually, at different times. It is also unknown whether there were any misunderstandings between the brother converts and Grgur, whether the brothers possibly tried to persuade Grgur to change the religion, and what impact their conversion had on Grgur's life. The source does not provide answers to such and similar questions, but from some later conversions we can establish, at least for individual cases, what influence the Islamized relatives exerted in the lives of the remaining Christians in the family. This is most clearly illustrated by the example of Friar Jeronim Lučić. When he was to be ordained in 1635, it was reported to Rome that his three brothers with their families had converted to Islam, and so did his nephew twelve years after serving as a priest. His opponents used it to present him as a person unworthy of the bishop's position and prevented his appointment.<sup>23</sup> It is hard to believe that Grgur had to suffer such embarrassments, but if the family of a Franciscan and a future bishop yielded under the pressure and converted to Islam, then what can we expect from uneducated and simple people who usually looked for their models precisely among priests and their families.

## The common use and cultivation of estates

After the conquest, when the Ottoman administration imposed the new system, the subjects were able to continue using their earlier estates, regardless of their religion, but with a mandatory deed that guaranteed their permanent possession

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is why this example has not been analysed in more detail. Namely, it is not unusual to find several persons of the same name in one place, which can often lead to confusion, especially when censuses like this are involved. Ibid., 345.

<sup>22</sup> Ibid., 328.

<sup>23</sup> Krunoslav Draganović, "Biskup fra Jeronim Lučić (o.1575.-1643.) i njegovo doba, II. dio: Povijesne prilike" [Bishop and Friar Jeronim Lučić (ca. 1575-1643) and his times, Part 2: Historical circumstances], *Croatica christiana periodica* 7 (1983), no. 11: 36.

and enjoyment for as long as they fulfilled their obligations to the new masters, or as long as there were legal heirs. According to the *kanunname* for the Bosnian, Herzegovinian, and Zvornik sancaks from 1539, the deed fee was collected for the subjects' land during transfers, except that it was not charged in direct inheritance from father to son.<sup>24</sup> As the number of conversions to Islam increased, there were also more and more Muslim holders stating their father's Christian name, and who held their properties together with Christian family members. The first such examples were recorded as early as in the first census of Herzegovina in the fifteenth century. In the village of Kunovo that belonged to Sokol, a *çiflik* was registered of Mahmud and his father Radko in joint possession, which they, as it is further written, "have held continuously from the time of the Herzog."<sup>25</sup> Further text specifies by name the lands of other Christians who were registered to it, and which Mahmud and his father now held together with certain Petar Vukić and his brothers. Likewise, in the part of *nahiye* called Dubštica, in the village of Hoćevina, there was a *çiflik* in joint possession of brothers, one of whom had converted to Islam: "Radosav and Hamza, his brother, and Todor, his brother, and Obrad, his brother."<sup>26</sup> While it is evident from the first example that Radko's son, now Mahmud, held his father's *baştina*, it cannot be affirmed with certainty for the second example relating to the *çiflik* of Radosav, Hamza, and other brothers, because the census-taker does not provide more accurate details about the earlier owners. The mentioned example indirectly indicates that the brothers, in addition to holding joint property, also cultivated the land together. Likewise, Mahmud had to cultivate the land together with his father and Petar Vukić and his brothers, because the *çiflik* itself was too large for only one family to cultivate.

We also find similar examples in the census of the Klis Sancak from 1550 and Herzog's Province from 1585, where it is mentioned in a number of places that a certain field, vineyard, or simply *baştina* or *çiflik* was jointly held by brothers of different religions. Thus, "the *çiflik* of Alija and Vukić, sons of Vukša" was registered in the village of Gorica, in the *nahiye* of Neretva, and "the *çiflik* of Pervan, Husejn and Jovica, sons of the deceased Dejan" in the village of Kutu, which be-

<sup>24</sup> Đurđev et al., *Kanuni i kanun-name*, 59. N. 34. A property usually changed owners when there were no male heirs or when the right of dwelling and property was sold and such it was subject to a deed. Brothers, uncles, and other relatives could obtain it only with a deed fee. Several such examples are registered in: *Opširni popis Kliškog sandžaka*, 146, 150, 151, 152, 155, 159, 161, 170, 177, 178, 199, 228, 279, 291, 294, 300, 322, 323, 357, 366, 369. Female family members could also be registered on a property just. Such examples are by far more numerous. *Opširni katastarski popis za oblast Hercegovu*, vol. II, passim; *Opširni popis Kliškog sandžaka*, passim.

<sup>25</sup> See note 7.

<sup>26</sup> *Poimenični popis*, 256-257, 361. In all citations mentioning brothers of different religion or some other kinship, the excerpt was highlighted by the author of the article.

longed to Uskoplje.<sup>27</sup> The last example provides some more information about the property itself. Sons of the deceased Dejan, together with his brothers and their sons, held the aforementioned *baština* obtained for the *martalos*<sup>28</sup> service of their grandfather Pavko in the village of Skrobučani. They cultivated the *çiflik* together and in addition to salaries, paid the miller's fees and *reaya*'s taxes. It is interesting that all Dejan's brothers remained Christians, unlike their children, all of whom converted to Islam except for the already mentioned Jovica and Dejan's nephew Juraj. Considering that they paid *reaya*'s taxes, here too it can be assumed that converting to Islam was motivated by welfare or tax relief.

Furthermore, in the *nahiye* of Dabar, which belonged to the Nevesinje *kaza*, it is recorded that *hassa*,<sup>29</sup> which consisted of two mills and two fields, as well as one meadow and vineyard, was "in the hands of *Jusuf and Nikola, sons of Mirko*, in the hands of Mehmed, son of Husein." For Radovan's *baština* in the village of Kalac, in the same *nahiye*, it is written that it was "in the hand of *Dragašin, son of Vukšin and Husrev, his brother*".<sup>30</sup> The first example shows that the mentioned *hassa* did not remain in the hands of Milan's sons, but was transferred to a man called Mehmed. The reason for that is that the *hassa* did not belong to *reaya*'s lands, but it was a *sipahi* who managed it while having a *timar* (land grant) at his disposal, and who most often sublet it. Accordingly, the brothers were tenants who cultivated a part of the *sipahi*'s *timar*. When the *timar* was taken over by a new *sipahi*, there was also a change of tenants. It remains unclear whether the new *sipahi* engaged new tenants immediately after taking over the *timar*, or did so only after the deaths of the two previous tenants. In the second example, brothers Dragašin and Husrev cultivated the land that had previously belonged to certain Radovan.

Although none of the examples presented here explicitly indicate that the brothers cultivated the land together, such a conclusion arises by itself. Joint possession also meant joint cultivation. Any doubt about joint cultivation of land is removed by the example of a *mezra* named Hmeljnica, which nowadays administratively belongs to Montenegro, where along with Ivan, son of Dimitrije, "Kurd, son of Kasim, Bašir son of Hasan, Alija, Pirija and Džafer," who "jointly sow and reap,"

<sup>27</sup> *Opširni popis Kliškog sandžaka*, 330, 342.

<sup>28</sup> Christian auxiliary troops, part of the Ottoman internal security forces.

<sup>29</sup> In the system of Timar, infield which are given for using to timariot for certain time until he stays there as timariot.

<sup>30</sup> *Opširni katastarski popis za oblast Hercegovu*, vol. II, 170, 182. There are several examples where Christians and Muslims jointly hold land, *baština*, or *chiflik*, but in some cases the kinship is unclearly indicated or not specified at all, probably because it did not exist, which is why such examples were not considered. See these examples in: *Opširni katastarski popis za oblast Hercegovu*, vol. II, 13, 162, 165, 172, 183, 189, 194, 200, 224, 308, 309, 339; *Opširni popis Kliškog sandžaka*, 31, 130, 194, 205, 215, 284, 288, 324, 345, 373.

were also recorded.<sup>31</sup> If Christians and Muslims who were not in any kind of relationship by all indications jointly cultivated land, then families of different religions must have done so too. Yields from land were too important for existence to be able to leave cultivation to only one brother, regardless of the religion.

It has been mentioned before that the right to inheritance was not lost by converting to another religion. Regarding land inheritance, Muslims and Christians were equal. A property that was registered to a Christian or a Muslim, with a mandatory deed, was transferred to the closest heirs after his death, regardless of whether a Muslim or a Christian family member was involved. This is confirmed by the following examples. “*Baština of Radan of Radoje, owned by Sulejman, his brother, now owned by Iskender, son of Ivan*” was registered in the village of Ljubunci, in the *nahiye* of Rama; “*Baština of Radica, in the hand of Grgur, now in the hand of Timur, his brother*” and “*Baština of Tomaš, in the hand of Mustafa and Memija, his brothers, now in the hand of Behram, son of Balija*” were registered in the villages of Podhum and Trebidnić in the *nahiye* of Neretva.<sup>32</sup> “*Baština of Radivoj, son of Marko, in the hand of Mahmud, his brother, in the hand of Velija, son of Kasim*” was registered in the *nahiye* of Dabar.<sup>33</sup> “*Baština of Rajko, son of Milašin, in the hand of Ahmed, his brother, in the hand of Mehmed son of Husein*” was registered in the village of Donje Zijemlje, while “*Baština of Radič, son of Vladko, in the hand of Behadir, his cousin, in the hand of Ilijas*” was registered in the village of Završ, which belonged to Kukanj.<sup>34</sup> Similarly, *baština* of a Muslim who had Christian heirs could be transferred to his Christian relatives, although there are very few such examples. Several of them were recorded. One in the *nahiye* of Rama, in the village of Duzi, where “*Baština of Ahmed, owned by Milić, his brother*” was registered, then in the village of Slatina, in the *nahiye* of Neretva where “*Baština of Alija, son of Ivan, in the hand of Radica, his brother*” was registered, and in the village of Gornje Konjice, nowadays Konjic, where “*Baština of Jusuf of Pomin, in the hand of Radoje his brother*” was registered.<sup>35</sup>

What we can conclude from the examples mentioned here is that nothing could guarantee a lasting property in the hands of the same family. Once the legal heirs were gone or the right to property was lost, the land passed to the new owner of the deed, or the person who paid to own it, regardless of whether a Christian or a Muslim was involved and regardless of whether the new owner of the deed was

<sup>31</sup> *Opširni katastarski popis za oblast Hercegovu*, vol. II, 504.

<sup>32</sup> *Opširni popis Kliškog sandžaka*, 180, 243, 282.

<sup>33</sup> *Opširni katastarski popis za oblast Hercegovu*, vol. II, 170.

<sup>34</sup> *Opširni katastarski popis za oblast Hercegovu*, vol. II, 307, 447.

<sup>35</sup> *Opširni popis Kliškog sandžaka*, 166, 247, 294. Several *baštinas* held by Muslims and then transferred to hands of Christians are registered in the censuses. However, since kinship between the owners is not specified, they have been omitted from this work. Ibid., 110, 113, 135, 313; *Opširni katastarski popis za oblast Hercegovu*, vol. II, 149, 217.

linked by blood ties to the previous owner, as shown in the above-mentioned examples. The amount of deed fee was assessed by impartial Muslims, and the property belonged to the one who paid more.

Heirs of different religions can also be found in the court records, in this case the court records of the Mostar *kadı* from the seventeenth century. After the suicide of *zimmi* Nikola residing in Ograđenik, “his sister Mara, brother Mustafa... and others” are specified as his heirs (although not explicitly mentioned, it is the year of 1633).<sup>36</sup> Nikola’s children are not mentioned as his heirs, which indicates that he did not have any, so the inheritance went to his closest relatives.

The mentioned data undoubtedly confirm that members of the same family and different religions jointly enjoyed and cultivated land. However, it is difficult to discern from the examples presented here whether converts lived in a common household with the Christian part of the family. Here, it is necessary to refer to the aforementioned *kanunname* of Herzog’s Province, where it is written in one place that tax on a *çift* of nine *akçes* is collected from Muslims who are married and live in a common household with their father or brothers. Since married Muslims and those who lived alone were giving 22 *akçes* for the same tax, it was certainly financially more cost-effective to live in a common household with the father or brothers. This was also facilitated by the patriarchal way of life. Namely, after the Ottoman conquest broke down the medieval feudal state, domestic cooperative became increasingly stronger as a consequence of patriarchal culture. This led to a stronger connection within the family, which consisted of several generations living in a common household. The more numerous the family was, the more hands there were to cultivate the land, thus the stronger the cooperative. If we take into account the patriarchal way of life, where sons often remained in their parents’ home even after marriage, it is correct to conclude that in most of the above cases brothers of different religions lived in a common household with Muslim or Christian family members. This is supported by a report of Dubrovnik’s Bishop Jeronim Frane Bunić, who recorded during the visit to the Trebinje-Mrkan diocese in 1729 that “*Turkish parents and Catholic children; or Catholic parents and Turkish children*” lived in a common household in the parish of Dubrava.<sup>37</sup> It was quite probably the same in other examples mentioned so far, where several brothers jointly owned and cultivated land, but also lived in a common household. Only female children left their parents’ home with marriage. However, jointly holding and cultivating a property did not always imply a joint household. Brothers, primarily those who founded their own families,

<sup>36</sup> *Sidžil mostarskog kadije 1632-1634*. [Sigil of the *kadı* of Mostar, 1632-1634] trans., introduction, and notes Muhamed A. Mujić (Mostar: IKRO Prva književna komuna, 1987), 80.

<sup>37</sup> Cited according to Milenko Krešić, “Povijesne okolnosti osnutka i osnutak župe Dubrave u Trebinjskoj biskupiji prije 300 godina” [Historical circumstances around the foundation of the Dubrava parish in the diocese of Trebinj 300 years ago], *Croatica christiana periodica* 30 (2006), no. 57: 125.



could separate from the community and live with their families in a separate household. This is confirmed by extensive tax censuses in which the census-takers registered every household separately, that is, the name of the head of each house that was obliged to give taxes, while providing a total number of houses for each individual place. From these lists, it is evident that there were brothers who lived in separate households in the same village. This is also indicated by the example of the *çiftlik* of Malkoč Bey and Hasan Bey, sons of Osman Bey, in the *nahiye* of Kupres, where “Nesuh, son of Ilija” and “Ahmed, his brother” were registered in separate households, and another example in the village of Višnjan, in the *nahiye* of Rama, where “Iskender, son of Juraj” and “Bali, brother of Iskender” were also registered in separate households within the *timar* of Iskender, son of Alija Vilić.<sup>38</sup>

Joint properties and inheritance rights inevitably led to disagreements and disputes over inheritance between brothers and sisters. It was precisely because of a dispute over inheritance that Husein and his brother-in-law Ivan, who represented his wife Anđelija, sister of the said Husein, appeared in the court of the Neretva *kadı* Ahmed, son of Džafer, in 1567 or 1569. They disputed over the *baştina* of the deceased father Ivan, which Hussein had illegally appropriated.<sup>39</sup> A similar example is found in the court records of the Mostar *kadı* from the seventeenth century. In Drežnica near Mostar, in the hamlet of Vrhpolje, brothers *Ahmed and Ilija* disputed over their father's *baştina*. As they stated before the *kadı*, the dispute had lasted long, and only when the third parties intervened there was a settlement between the brothers who divided the *baştina* equally.<sup>40</sup> These disputes did not arise because of differences in religion, but because of the disrupted relationships between brothers and sisters over inheritance, which is still a regular occurrence. This is all the more important because it shows that the brothers did not come into conflict because of religious issues. Even if there were such disagreements, they did not happen within the family. Property rights preoccupied the inhabitants of Herzegovina more because land or *baştina* was often the main source of income, even if reduced due to the mandatory taxes that *reaya* had to pay, and thereby all the more important for survival and existence. In addition, conversions to Islam in the fifteenth, sixteenth, and seventeenth centuries should be observed in the context of the time in which they occurred. For many, it was a necessary evil in order to obtain some benefits for themselves and their families and make life easier. The very fact that conversions to Islam did not disrupt family relations to a significant extent, which is corroborated by the

<sup>38</sup> *Opširni popis Kliškog sandžaka*, 164, 173.

<sup>39</sup> Acta turcica, Zaostrog 52. Unpublished original material in the Ottoman Turkish language (15<sup>th</sup>-17<sup>th</sup> centuries) in the Franciscan monasteries of Makarska, Zaostrog and Omiš (Hereinafter: AT and the abbreviated name of the monastery).

<sup>40</sup> *Sidžil mostarskog kadije 1632-1634*, 27.

common life and work of converts and their Christian brothers, is an indicator not only of the interrelations at the time, but also of the then way of thinking. A convert may change religion and name, but his Christian family, with whom he lived in a community, benefited from his conversion. It seems that nobody bothered too much about the fact that these families were considered Muslim because of their converts. Such an attitude toward the new religion may be best described by Tijana Krstić when she says that “often, people first converted and only later learned what it meant to be a Muslim, with families converting gradually, sometimes over several generations.”<sup>41</sup>

Conversion to the new religion eventually did not guarantee the better life and safety that many had hoped for. Increasing burdens and tax obligations, constant uncertainty, and the difficult economic situation made life difficult for both Christians and Muslims, which resulted in sales of land because of indebtedness or unpaid obligations. As early as the sixteenth century, in the village of Buljine, which belonged to the *nahiye* of Neretva, during the census of vineyards and their owners, it was recorded that brothers Mehmed and Tomaš together with other co-owners sold a part of the vineyard plot called Oprkanj.<sup>42</sup> The census-taker did not record the details of the sale, but it is an indication that conversion to Islam did not always ensure better living conditions. This is also corroborated by the court records data from the seventeenth century showing that many Muslims sold their property or pledged it, usually because of debts to *vakıfs* (charity foundations). How many of them were of Christian origin? Most of them, only this was the case of the second, third, or fourth generations, so the sources usually state the Muslim name of the father, or simply Abdullah for those who only recently converted to Islam.

### Family relationships, Christian customs and influences

Since conversion to Islam did not mean separation from the Christian family, it was difficult to give up the earlier way of life, so many converts did not behave in accordance with the Islamic religion. This is also supported by a record from 1633, when several Muslims from the Fatima Hatun quarter in Mostar, together with their imam, requested in the court that selling wine and *rakı* (white brandy) “to some only-by-name Muslims be prohibited”.<sup>43</sup> Although the names of the accused are not mentioned, it is clear that these were converts that had not yet abandoned their Christian habits. The sales and consumption of alcohol, or any

<sup>41</sup> Tijana Krstić, “Islam and Muslims in Europe”, in: *The Oxford Handbook of Early Modern European History, 1350-1750: Peoples and Place*, Vol. I, ed. Hamish Scott (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2015), 680.

<sup>42</sup> *Opširni popis Kliškog sandžaka*, 224.

<sup>43</sup> *Sidžil mostarskog kadije 1632-1634*, 206.

contact with it whatsoever, was strictly forbidden to Muslims. Despite this, there were Muslims who continued trading in alcohol or even consuming it. We find a reference to this related to the Franciscans in their monasteries, who often had to serve their Muslim visitors in their *misafirhanes* (guesthouses) built precisely for that purpose. On one occasion, the Franciscans failed to offer wine to their Muslim guests, among whom there were religious officials, for which they were criticized and everything eventually resulted in a quarrel.<sup>44</sup> Therefore, it is no wonder that a good part of the Muslim population in Bosnia and Herzegovina consumed alcohol, despite all attempts of the authorities to prohibit such practices.<sup>45</sup> We find data on the consumption of alcoholic beverages also in the Blagaj *kaza* in 1730, when the Herzegovinian *mutasarrif* (governor) Rustem Pasha sent a *buyuruldu* (written order of a governor) to the responsible persons of Ljubinje, Stolac, Blagaj, Trebinje, and Počitelj, ordering them to investigate who were the individuals producing wine and brandy, these “mothers of evil,” and to put an end to this practice.<sup>46</sup> Rustem Pasha’s efforts to prevent the production and consumption of alcohol did not have any significant success. Already in the following year, he sent a new order to the Blagaj *kaza* demanding an investigation in which houses alcoholic beverages were drunk and sold, since users of alcoholic beverages disturbed people in the said *kaza*.<sup>47</sup> Here it is difficult to distinguish whether Muslim or non-Muslim households were involved, but taking into account that making alcoholic beverages was primarily a Christian custom and that the majority of Muslims were of Christian origin, it is reasonable to conclude that this instruction could equally apply to Muslim and non-Muslim families, or individuals. The problem of consuming alcoholic beverages is also attested by the case of Ibrahim Zlomušica from the village of Banj Dol, registered in the Blagaj court records in 1778. Because of alcohol consumption, Ibrahim found himself before the *shari’a* court and repented in front of witnesses for what he had done, pledging that he would no longer do so. But despite his repentance and the pronounced pledge, the said Ibrahim attacked Hatidža, woman of a man called Fazlibeg, for which he was punished. After that, he pledged again to be punished

<sup>44</sup> Plenty of data on troubles of the Franciscans who had been visiting Herzegovinian believers from the monasteries in Imotski, Zaostrog, Makarska is provided by the material in the Ottoman Turkish language in the Franciscan monasteries of Makarska, Zaostrog and Omiš. One of the mentioned documents describes a case involving wine, when after lunch the Franciscans did not offer wine to the hatib, imam, and other persons in their escort, which led to verbal exchanges. AT, M IV-26.

<sup>45</sup> A study on drinking alcohol in the Ottoman period and the unsuccessful attempts to ban its consumption and trade is given by Muhamed A. Mujić, “Prilog proučavanju uživanja alkoholnih pića u Bosni i Hercegovini pod osmanskom vlašću” [A contribution to the research on alcohol consumption in Bosnia and Herzegovina under the Ottoman rule], *Prilozi za orijentalnu filologiju* 5 (1955): 287-298.

<sup>46</sup> *Sidžil blagajskog kadije 1141-1145. / 1728-1732. (regesta)* [Sigil of the *kadi* of Blagaj, 1141-1145 / 1728-1732 (regesta), ed. Hivzija Hasandedić (Mostar: Islamski kulturni centar, 2009), 36.

<sup>47</sup> *Sidžil blagajskog kadije*, 33.

with the money amount of 25 *guruşes* (small coins) if he repeated the same act.<sup>48</sup> It is not known whether Ibrahim had attacked Hatidža under the influence of alcohol and whether he finally kept his pledge, but it is certain that Muslims had a weakness for alcohol, regardless of the religious prohibition. Wine and brandy were often involved in breaking religious or legal bans, and their lovers often found themselves in all sorts of problems and unpleasant situations. Therefore, the verses composed by an anonymous merry fellow and brandy user does not surprise us, as it reads: "Hey, brandy, randy, I love you very, and you with me randy, slowly to the ditch."<sup>49</sup>

As it was hard for the new Muslims to abandon Christian customs, so was the case with family ties, which were not broken even when the converts were far away from their homeland. Relations between members of different religions are most realistically illustrated by two examples which, although well-known in historiography, cannot be left unmentioned in a paper discussing the relationships between converts and their Christian families. The first example comes from Šibenik and concerns canon Juraj Tardić and his brother Duke Murat Bey Tardić, who after falling to Turkish captivity and becoming a slave of Husrev Bey, adopted Islam and remained in Husrev Bey's service. As Vladislav Skarić states, "the ties between the brothers were not broken, although religion divided them."<sup>50</sup> A report of the Count of Šibenik dated May 30, 1526 informs us that Juraj maintained contacts with his brother Murat. He visited Murat during his trip to Sarajevo in the spring of the said year and, as we find out from the same report, he intended to visit him again.<sup>51</sup>

Another example of a relation between relatives of different religions involves the Bosnian provincial, Pater Martin Brguljanin, and his family who for the most part converted to Islam. A report about that is provided by Nikola Lašvanin, who states, among other things, that Brguljanin received a visit by his Muslim brother in the Sutjeska monastery, whom he reprimanded for his conversion to Islam.<sup>52</sup>

<sup>48</sup> Bosnia and Herzegovina – Archive of Herzegovina, Mostar – *Sidžil blagajskog kadije 1698.-1779.* (rev. Hivzija Hasandedić), sheet 27/b.

<sup>49</sup> Such verses are not something unusual in Herzegovina and were often used to justify or alleviate some experienced inconvenience or accident.

<sup>50</sup> Vladislav Skarić, *Izabrana djela, knj. 1: Sarajevo i njegova okolina od najstarijih vremena do austrougarske okupacije* [Selected works, Book 1: Sarajevo and its surroundings from the ancient times until the Austro-Hungarian occupation] (Sarajevo: Veselin Masleša, 1985), 68. There is no significant separate study about Murat Bey. He is only mentioned in the context of Gazi Husrev Bey, as his associate and trusted person. In this context, he is also mentioned by Behija Zlatar, *Gazi Husrev-beg* (Sarajevo: Orijentalni institut, Posebna izdanja XXXII, 2010), 151-153.

<sup>51</sup> "Da Sebenico di S. Bernardim da cha Taiapiera conte date adi 30 mazo come per il ritorno di Bossina di Pre Zorzi Gaidi Canonico di Sebenico qual za zorni quaranta andoe in Bossina a visitar il fratello Morat Capizi Bassa [...] Canonico vol tornar il Bossina dal fratello et sapendo alcuna nova avisara." Ivan Kukuljević Sakcinski, ed. *Arkiv za povjestnicu jugoslavensku* 8 (1865): 234-235.

<sup>52</sup> "Martin Brguljanin, iznad Vareša. Ovomu se rodbina isturčiše. I dohodio bi mu brat Turčin u Sutinsku a on bi ga pogrđivao i ružio." [Martin Brguljanin, above Vareš. Relatives of this one all turned

Only a few examples concerning dignitaries and their relatives are mentioned here, but undoubtedly also among common people there was mutual respect and contact with those members of their families who had converted to Islam. All the aforesaid confirms that conversion to Islam did not eventually mean a complete break with the old religion, nor were the converts prepared to completely abandon the customs and ties that connected them with the Christian part of their families. Although the sources keep silent about it, there must have been a certain number of those who, after converting to Islam, did not remain in contact with their Christian relatives. We can only assume that individuals who, looking for better living conditions, left the old area and settled in other, more distant places could not maintain regular contacts with their Christian relatives, and there were certainly those who lost their close family because of the war, illnesses, or other calamities. Only during the armed conflicts in the seventeenth century, thousands of Christians left Herzegovina and moved to the Venetian territory. We can only speculate how many of them lost contact with their Muslim relatives forever.

As conversion to Islam for many did not mean a complete break with old customs, so there were those who secretly professed Catholicism. This is manifest in a record from 1628, when the Sacred Congregation for the Propagation of the Faith (*Sacra Congregatio de Propaganda Fide*)<sup>53</sup> made the decision to send to the Holy Office the question about the Ottomans or Muslims who wanted to profess the Catholic religion in secret, which was preceded by a letter of Bishop Dominik Andrijašević.<sup>54</sup> This did not happen only in Herzegovina, but also in other areas under the Ottoman rule. A well-known example is the Stavriots<sup>55</sup> in Greece, who continued practicing Christian customs after converting to Islam. A case of dual identity is also recorded in northern Albania, where some Catholics wanted to avoid paying the head tax by converting to Islam, but were not willing to abandon their old customs. Even the local parish priests allowed them to participate in religious services. They even secretly married Christian girls. Similar things happened in Skopje and in Montenegro.<sup>56</sup> We will probably never be able to es-

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Turks. And his brother would come to him to Sutinska, and he would insult and scold him.] Nikola Lašvanin, *Ljetopis* [Annals], ed. Ignacije Gavran (Sarajevo; Zagreb, 2003), 254.

<sup>53</sup> The *Sacra Congregatio de Propaganda Fide* was established in 1622 by Pope Gregory XV. The basic task of the Congregation was to spread and maintain faith. Pope John Paul II renamed it to the Congregation for the Evangelization of Peoples in 1982, but the mission remained the same.

<sup>54</sup> "Negotia matrimoniorum Catholicorum cum schismaticis, rebaptizationis schismaticorum ad fidem catholicam venientium et Turcarum eandem fidem occulte profiteri volentium ab Episcopo Stephanensi significata, ad Sanctum Officium fuerunt remissa." Bazilije Pandžić, ed., *Acta franciscana Hercegovinae, vol.1: 1209.-1699.*, (Mostar: ZIRAL, 2009), 280.

<sup>55</sup> The crypto-Christians of Asia Minor.

<sup>56</sup> Antonina Zhelyazkova, "Islamization in the Balkans as an Historiographical Problem: the South-east-European Perspective", in: *The Ottomans and the Balkans. A Discussion of Historiography*, ed. Fikret Adanir and Suraiya Faroqhi (Leiden; Boston; Cologne: Brill, 2002), 244-245.

establish with certainty how many continued to pray Our Father and mark Christian holidays in the secrecy of their home among the new Muslims in the area of Bosnia and Herzegovina.

Christian influences among the Muslim population were visible even in the very centre of the Ottoman Empire, Istanbul. Records of European observers, analysed by Michel Balivet, confirm that there were converts who remained faithful to their Christian beliefs even after conversion to Islam, although secretly. One of the European observers, the French humanist Guillaume Postel, who visited Istanbul in 1536, noted that a Muslim who taught him Ottoman Turkish language, and who had converted to Islam during the reign of Sultan Selim I (1512-1520), showed a particular respect for the New Testament. In one of his documents, Postel confirms that a large number of Muslims in the Ottoman Empire "tacite une Christum consentit, maxime in Turcarum aula" [secretly believed in one Christ, even in an Ottoman environment].<sup>57</sup> If in Istanbul, the heart of the Ottoman Empire and the residence of the Ottoman Sultan, there were those who tacitly remained loyal to their old religion, we can only guess how many such cases there were in the area of the Bosnian Eyalet, the border province hundreds of kilometres away from the centre of the Ottoman state.

## Conclusion

The break with Christianity could not and certainly did not happen overnight. Even after converting to Islam, the converts maintained relations with their Christian relatives, lived and worked with them. Because of the large number of those who converted to Islam and their connection with Christian families and customs, and the fact that many of them changed their religion at an adult age, their vivid memory of the Christian religion, customs, and family is understandable. Converts could not easily forget their family past and having belonged to a different religion. In addition, who can say that all those who converted to Islam truly accepted the new religion? We will never find out how many among the new Muslims continued saying Christian prayers or quietly celebrated Christian holidays in the seclusion of their homes.

It is certain that the unwritten history hides many examples of relationships and ties between Christians and Muslims, which all confirms that the change of religion did not necessarily lead to alienation from one another. Religion, name, and

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<sup>57</sup> Cited according to Michel Balivet, "Chrétien secrets et martyrs chrétien en Islam turc. Quelques cas à travers les textes (XIII<sup>e</sup> - XVII<sup>e</sup> siècles)", *Islamochristiana* 16 (1990): 93. In his work, Balivet presents a number of testimonies of Christian and Muslim authors supporting the western sources about Christian influence among the Muslims, Christian beliefs among the Ottoman intellectual classes, and the attitude of the Ottoman authorities toward those who publicly spoke about the superiority of Jesus Christ over Muhammad. More about that on pages 93-112.



the way of life could change, but not the origins. If we could travel through time today, go back to the sixteenth or seventeenth century, and follow the life paths of converts and their Christian relatives, we would certainly find, somewhere among the Muslims, the very image of Grgur or perhaps Tomaš, Ivo, Marko, and other unknown persons whose brothers converted to Islam. It was certainly the most difficult thing for a convert to abandon the former way of life and the Christian customs with which he had grown up, and to accept and practice another religion. But for his descendants of the third or fourth generation, these problems were no longer there. With time, they would get accustomed to the new religion and its customs, and the memories of their Christian ancestors would gradually fade away.

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## **Prijelazi na islam u Bosni i Hercegovini i veze konvertita s njihovom kršćanskom obitelji, od osmanskoga osvajanja do kraja 17. stoljeća**

### **Sažetak**

Islamizacija je bila jedan od glavnih čimbenika koji su utjecali na društvene i kulturne promjene koje su obilježile osmansko razdoblje na prostoru Bosne i Hercegovine. Mnogi su u nastojanju da si olakšaju život i težak položaj u kojemu su se nalazili prelazili na vjeru vladajućega društvenog sloja. Posljedica toga bile su i miješane obitelji čiji su članovi pripadali različitom vjerezakonu. Na temelju dostupne građe pokušava se sagledati veze konvertita s kršćanskim dijelom obitelji te kako su prijelazi na islam utjecali na živote konvertita i njihovih kršćanskih rođaka. Prihvatanje druge vjere nije značilo i odbacivanje starih navika i kršćanske tradicije. Bez obzira na promjenu vjerezakona i novih religijskih uzusa koje su morali slijediti, bilo je onih koji su i dalje nastavljali živjeti starim načinom života. Tome su velikim dijelom pridonijele veze preobraćenika s njihovom kršćanskom obitelji. Razlika u imenu i vjeri nije prekidala obiteljske veze čak ni onda kada su obitelji bile razdvojene.

*KLjučne riječi:* konvertiti, obitelj, Hercegovina, obiteljske veze kršćana i muslimana, baština

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